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SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/04/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [ETRD](#) [PHUM](#) [CU](#) [NL](#)  
SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/CUBA: DUTCH EXPECT EU TO DROP  
SANCTIONS

REF: A. STATE 62450 / GIAUQUE EMAIL 6-6-08

[1B](#). THE HAGUE 458  
[1C](#). FALLS-OTALLAH EMAIL 06-04-08  
[1D](#). FALLS-TLSMITH EMAIL 06-03-08

Classified By: Political Officer Eric Falls for reasons 1.5(b, d)

[11](#). (C) SUMMARY: Dutch MFA officials expect the EU to drop  
(the currently suspended) sanctions against Cuba. END  
SUMMARY.

[12](#). (C) On June 13, Charge spoke with MFA Deputy Director for  
the Western Hemisphere Department, Jos Schellaars, who  
indicated that the EU is likely to lift the Cuba sanctions.  
Schellaars noted that he was "not at all certain the Czechs  
will block" consensus on this, but then in an aside added  
"well you never know what will happen." He also stated that  
the Dutch will continue to press the Cubans to release  
political prisoners. Dutch MFA Cuba desk officer Jan Jaap  
Groenemeijer, in a conversation with poloff, could not  
confirm whether the EU would drop sanctions during the June  
16 GAERC. According to Groenemeijer, it was impossible to say  
what the ministers will do behind closed doors -- he was  
"unsure if the minority will bow under pressure."  
Groenemeijer explained that the "minority" is a single  
nation, with one additional nation undecided on its position.

Groenemeijer added that there were rumors the EU could even  
delay the decision on Cuba. Groenemeijer concluded that FM  
Verhagen wants to "guarantee results" from any dialogue with  
Cuba, following the goals of the EU Common Position to  
advance human rights and obtain the release of political  
prisoner.

[13](#). (C) Also on June 13, Dutch MFA Deputy EU Correspondent  
Rochus Pronk indicated that the EU's COREPR was scheduled to  
meet early on June 16, ahead of the ministers meeting, to  
confirm an agreement to drop sanctions. However, there is  
time to confer over the weekend on the "bracketed" text.  
Pronk was not sure if Cuba would be a full "A point" and  
approved by the ministers without discussion. He noted that  
FM Verhagen was "reluctant" to drop the sanctions, believing  
the moment was not quite right, but that the decision to drop  
contemplates the EU evaluation Cuba's progress in human  
rights in one year's time.

[14](#). (C) On June 12, MFA Director for the Western Hemisphere  
Department, Laurent Stokvis, told poloff that the EU policy  
toward Cuba would not be rational if some nations were  
engaging Cuba but others were not. According to Stokvis,  
twenty-five EU members support ending the sanctions policy,  
one nation wants to maintain it, and one is looking for  
middle ground. On June 4, Stokvis told poloff that he "would  
not be surprised" if the EU reached agreement on ending the  
sanctions (ref C). Stokvis had just returned from Brussels  
discussions, where they were debating the issue. In  
Stokvis, view, the EU's two-track policy isn't credible if  
the EU cannot engage Cuba. The Dutch would be "less than  
content" if the sanctions were ended (Comment: meaning that  
the Dutch would be pleased but not elated if the sanctions

are ended. End comment.)

¶5. (C) On June 3, Charge met with MFA Deputy Director for the Western Hemisphere Department, Jos Schellaars, who said he was "optimistic" about Cuba as "things are changing rapidly." They have released some prisoners and are "talking to dissidents." "Once it (liberalization) starts, you can only stop it with significant force."

Gallagher